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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000954

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#) [HRPREL](#) [NATO](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA AT THE SIGNING OF THE ADRIATIC CHARTER

CLASSIFIED BY: CDA PATRICK S. MOON FOR REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

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11. (C) CROATIA TOOK SOME TIME TO WARM TO THE IDEA OF THE ADRIATIC CHARTER. BECAUSE OF ITS FEAR OF BEING TRAPPED IN A NEW BALKAN ALLIANCE AND ALSO BECAUSE OF AN ARROGANT ASSUMPTION THAT ITS MORE ADVANCED LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MADE IT A BETTER NATO CANDIDATE, CROATIA RESISTED TYING ITS FORTUNES TO ALBANIA AND MACEDONIA. BUT CROATIA HAS SINCE BECOME AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF THE CHARTER. THE GOVERNMENT AND ESPECIALLY FM PICULA HAVE TAKEN US AT OUR WORD THAT EACH CANDIDATE WILL BE EVALUATED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. THEY ALSO REALIZE THAT BY SIGNING, CROATIA CAN DEMONSTRATE ITS COMMITMENT TO WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER PROSPECTIVE ALLIES. FINALLY, PICULA HOPES THAT THE CHARTER WILL ENSURE THAT THE U.S. REMAINS COMMITTED TO FUTURE EXPANSION.

12. (C) WE EXPECT THAT THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE WILL ALLOW VERY LITTLE TIME FOR SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION WITH FM PICULA. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHICH MAY COME UP IN WHICH THE SECRETARY'S ENGAGEMENT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL.

UN-FROZEN ASSETS FROM YUGOSLAVIA

13. (C) CROATIA CONTINUES TO OBJECT TO OUR FORMULA TO UN-BLOCK FUNDS FROZEN IN THE U.S. BY MILOSEVIC-ERA SANCTIONS.

POINT TO MAKE:

- CROATIA NEEDS TO PUT THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST, AS OTHER SUCCESSOR STATES HAVE, AND ACCEPT THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS.
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ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENT

14. (C) CROATIA HAS NOT BEGUN TO NEGOTIATE AN ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENT, AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE ESSENTIAL TO CROATIA'S MODERNIZATION AND INTEROPERABILITY GOALS IS IN JEOPARDY.

POINT TO MAKE:

- URGE YOU TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE JULY 1 DEADLINE IS LOOMING AND CROATIA MUST NOT COUNT ON A WAIVER.

ICTY COOPERATION

15. (C) CROATIA MET THE TRIBUNAL'S RECENT DEADLINES FOR COOPERATION, BUT ONLY AT THE LAST MINUTE AND ONLY UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE. THE INDICTMENT WAS SERVED ON GENERAL BOBETKO, REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS ARE ON THE WAY TO BEING FULFILLED, AND FUGITIVE ICTY INDICTEE IVICA RAJIC HAS BEEN APPREHENDED.

POINTS TO MAKE:

- PROMPT AND FULL COOPERATION WITH ICTY IS ESSENTIAL AND NON-NEGOTIABLE AND IS A LITMUS TEST FOR CROATIA'S READINESS TO ADVANCE IN THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION INTO NATO AND THE EU.

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- URGE YOU TO REDOUBLE YOUR EFFORTS TO APPREHEND ICTY FUGITIVE ANTE GOTOVINA.

REFUGEE RETURNS

16. (C) CROATIA HAS NOT DONE ENOUGH ON THIS ISSUE. DESPITE PROGRESS ON RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-DAMAGED HOUSES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO MEET DEADLINES ON EVICTIONS OF THOUSANDS OF CROAT "SQUATTERS" IN HOMES BELONGING TO ETHNIC

SERBS WHO FLED DURING THE WAR, NOR HAS IT MET COMMITMENTS TO COMPENSATE OWNERS. NOW THE RACAN GOVERNMENT IS RESISTING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON THIS ISSUE.

POINT TO MAKE:

- IT IS THE CONSENSUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO SUPPORT REFUGEE RETURNS. THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE, AND UNTIL IT IS ADDRESSED IN A SERIOUS, SYSTEMATIC WAY, IT BLOCKS CROATIA'S INTEGRATION INTO EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS.

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ACTION EUR-00

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| INFO | LOG-00 | NP-00 | AF-00 | AID-00 | CIAE-00 | INL-00 | DODE-00 |
| | SRPP-00 | DS-00 | FBIE-00 | VC-00 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | IO-00 |
| | LAB-01 | L-00 | VCE-00 | AC-01 | DCP-01 | NRRC-00 | NSAE-00 |
| | NSCE-00 | OIC-02 | DHS-00 | OPIC-01 | PA-00 | PM-00 | PRS-00 |
| | ACE-00 | P-00 | SCT-00 | SP-00 | IRM-00 | SSO-00 | TRSE-00 |
| | USIE-00 | R-00 | SSD-00 | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 | PRM-00 | DRL-01 |
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AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY
USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY

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CONTRIBUTION TO WAR ON TERROR/IRAQI FREEDOM
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17. (C) CROATIA HAS BEEN A SOLID ALLY IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM, AND HAS MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS. CROATIA'S ONLY MILITARY UNIT CERTIFIED AS NATO-INTEROPERABLE (AN MP PLATOON) IS NOW DEPLOYED IN AFGHANISTAN. CROATIA REFUSED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COALITION ON IRAQ, PREFERRING TO SCORE POINTS WITH THE FRENCH TO SUPPORT ITS EU MEMBERSHIP BID. CROATIA HAS OFFERED IN-KIND ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ AND IS CONSIDERING OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS, BUT THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR, AND THE RACAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN WILLING TO SWIM THE TIDE AGAINST PUBLIC OPINION TO SUPPORT OUR APPROACH. OFFICIALS SEEK TO KEEP CROATIA'S COOPERATION ON TERRORISM DISTINCT FROM ITS RESISTANCE ON IRAQ.

POINT TO MAKE

- WE APPRECIATE CROATIA'S IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAR ON TERRORISM. WE HOPE CROATIA WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CONCRETE REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT TO ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ.

PROGRESS TOWARD MEMBERSHIP IN NATO

18. (C) IN THE THREE YEARS SINCE THE CURRENT COALITION DEFEATED THE NATIONALIST REGIME LED BY TUDJMAN'S HDZ, CROATIA'S STATUS CHANGED FROM BEING OUTSIDE PFP TO THAT OF SERIOUS ASPIRANT IN NATO'S MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLAN. PROGRESS HAS BEEN UNEVEN AND, IN SOME AREAS, DISAPPOINTING. AT CROATIA'S FIRST FORMAL MAP REVIEW IN BRUSSELS ON MAY 8,
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PICULA WILL HEAR A TOUGH MESSAGE ON REFORMS.

POINT TO MAKE:

- COMMEND YOUR GOVERNMENT'S PROGRESS AND REITERATE USG COMMITMENT TO NATO'S OPEN DOOR. URGE YOU TO MAKE PROGRESS ON KEY REFORM AREAS -- MOST OF NATO'S BENCHMARKS WILL HELP YOU PROGRESS TOWARD MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU AS WELL.
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